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ABSTRACT

Social studies courses provide a natural home for emphasis on the values of global education. However, in a curriculum already crowded, it is difficult to find an appropriate place to add a course on global education. One alternative is to infuse global objectives into existing courses. There are a number of strategies for doing this successfully. One approach is to introduce questions about likenesses and differences between people, races, cultures, and nationalities into every lesson. Another strategy is to select one or more positive value statements for discussion at the conclusion of textbook units. Evaluation of these methods can be achieved through attitude questionnaires. (LP)

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INFUSING GLOBAL EDUCATION

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INFUSING GLOBAL EDUCATION

The 1983 Thirtieth Anniversary Assembly of the International Council on Education for Teaching focused on teaching for international understanding. This is only one of many evidences of a growing awareness among educators that an understanding of global issues is a survival skill for the rest of this century and for the next as well.

A new book by Rokeach, Rokeach, and Gruber, the Great American Values Test: Influencing Behavior and Belief Through Television, suggests that people may be persuaded into positive attitudes toward values. Social studies courses area natural home for emphasis on the values of global education. But the present fullness of the social studies curriculum as well as current emphasis on the basic social sciences forecloses the option of adding a course in international understanding, even were that the way to develop curricular emphasis on global education.

A better alternative is for teachers of social studies to make a conscious effort to integrate and infuse objectives productive on international understanding into every course. And it must be the teacher who makes the effort. Textbook writers and creators of educational materials have, for the most part, other objectives.

One approach suited to almost any unit is to infuse questions about likenesses and differences

between peoples, races, cultures, and nationalities consistently into every lesson. To be effective in the mission of creating positive awareness of global issues, this teaching must appear in many contexts, repetitively and persistently. Here is a set of useful questions about differences, with applications in may social studies contexts:

> What are the most interesting activities and attitudes of the people you have met in this unit? Are these activities interesting because they are like or different from ours? What activities of ours would these people find interesting? If they came to see us, what would we like them to see and do? What would we like to see and do when we visit them? What foods new to us and to them would an exchange of visits introduce to each of us? How could a linking for these foods enable all of us to use our natural resources more effectively as well as increase trade? What would we find most difficult to understand and accept about each other? Why? Which differences have their roots in geography or climate? What other good reasons for differences can you find?

Tne social studies teacher who wants students to examine likenesses will focus on questions such as these:

> If foods, work, and home life are different, in what ways are we and other cultures alike? What do parents in both cultures want for their children? What kinds of ambition do young people in both cultures have for their futures? What kinds of leaders do both groups seek?

Questions like these do not gloss over legitimate differences. But they do point out that differences can be more superficial than likenesses.

Here is a practical approach to infusing international understanding into a unit. Select one or more of these positive value statements to pursue

in each unit. Repeat consideration in later units of those that seem most productive.

Differences between people and cultures are often soundly based upon skills necessary to survival in the presence of geographical or other factors which legitimize certain behaviors.

Differences between cultures are usually interesting, not funny or unpleasant.

Other peoples find our habits as "different" as we do theirs.

It is desirable, not frightening or alienating, to accept a wide variety of ways to live our own lives and to see others living theirs.

Certain ways of speaking about others reinforce racial and national stereotypes that limit our ability to understand others and to enjoy differences between us.

Individual differences between members of the same ethnic group are often as great as those between groups.

A study of cultural variety is an integrative mediator between diverse vaule-distinct groups when differences between people are seen as opportunities for mutual enrichment, for pleasantness and enjoyment, for creative responses to cultural pluralism rather than for fear and alienation.

Cultural and national variations in values and behavior are most often found in the material accompaniments of human life or in the ways human values are expressed; the underlying values themselves, such as love for family and country and the ambition for a better life for oneself and one's children are found in all people.

One can be proud and confident in one's own way of life, cultural heritage, and value system without diminishing respect for those of others.

Strategies can be developed for using differences between members of the international community for mutual support and finding a useful role for each.

Values can be formulated which serve the needs of each culture, while they meet needs of the larger world community.

Preservation of the natural environment and ecological balance is a value all cultures can share, since sea and air observe natural, not national boundaries.

If a social studies teacher adopts these objectives and implements them in lessons and units, a way needs to be found to evaluate whether results have been achieved. The attitude questionnaire, used at the start and end of the experiment, is a good measureing device. To increase candor in responses, the questionnaire should be given in ways that protect anonymity. Change or lack of change in attitudes of the total class response, not individual change is what needs to be assessed to measure success of the teaching.

Here are examples of statements that could be embodied in such a before/after questionnaire to ascertain if attempts to positively affect attitudes toward international understanding have affected student attitudes. A scaled response should be called for---"very true," "true," "somewhat true," "not true."

I do not really like to work or live around people who are of a different race or nationality from mine.

Americans are more likely to be reasonable in their attitudes toward international affairs than people of other countries.

It is all right to use slang ways of referring to people who are different if they are not around to hear.

It is easy to recognize the character traits of certain races and nationalities.

As long as there are problems right here at home, we should restrict aid to other countries.

It is natural for interests of different countries to conflict.

The ecological problems of other countries do not have much effect on our lives.

The teacher will think of many more index statements to use to test for attitude changes. All statements should be reasonable and not "telegraph" the desired response.

If increased awareness of the importance of understanding between races, cultures, and nationalities is a value we want to promote in social studies classes, planning lessons to include information and directed discussion of these values may yield an evaluation that rewards the teaching effort.

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